(b) whether it is also a fact that ULFA blew-up OIL's pipeline near Duliajan in upper Assam;

(c) if so, the extent of damage due to these attacks to the oil companies;

(d) whether any action plan has been initiated against the culprits; and

(e) the steps taken to check such incidents in future and ensure safety of the reference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) On 7.3.2003 at around 11.45 A.M., a fire broke out in a petrol tank in the Tank Farm of Digboi refinery of IOCL after two loud sounds. On 8.3.2003 at 0120 hours there was a blast in the two pipelines connected to main gas distribution grid in OIL's oil fields near Duliajan. As per the media reports, the ULFA has claimed responsibility for these incidents.

(c) The loss, as reportd by the oil companies, is estimated to be Rs. 14.47 crore and Rs. 25 lakh respectively for IOCL and OIL.

(d) First information report has been lodged in connection with both the above incidents. Police investigations are on. In additions, a Magisterial enquiry by the District Magistrate, Tinsukhia is in progress in relation to the attack on tank farm of Digboi refinery.

(e) Security measures have been tightned by increase patrolling of vulnerable points by the oil company security Forces/CISF/Assam Police and Army. Request has been made to the Assam Government for deploying additional company of CRPF for Digboi refinery.

Removal of ban on new dealers

2737. SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has lifted the ban on State-owned oil companies from setting up petrol pumps and LPG agencies;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the marketing heads of oil PSUs have been asked to submit the guidelines to the Ministry before they are implemented;

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to see that the reservation of weaker sections, freedom fighters and widows is adhered to; and

(e) what are the other conditions impsoed on these dealers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (e) Consequent upon the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector with effect from 1.4.2002, the selection of dealers/distributors for retail outlets (petrol pumps) and LPG distributorships at different locations in the country, will be made by the oil marketing companies (OMCs) themselves as per the guidelines to be adopted by them. Preliminary action like selection of suitable sites for setting up of retail outlets/LPG distributorships, etc., has been initiated by the OMCs.

Availability of two varieties of petrol

2738. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two types of petrol are available at the petrol pumps;

(b) if so, what is the rationale behind introducing two types of petrol in the retail outlet; and

(c) whether Government propose to maintain uniform standard as far as petrol is considered to keep the pollution level low?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under Administered Pricing Mechanism, the concept of branded fuel was non existent except for selling of higher octane fuel. With the opening up of market and private sector being allowed to market POL products, in order to face the expected increased